

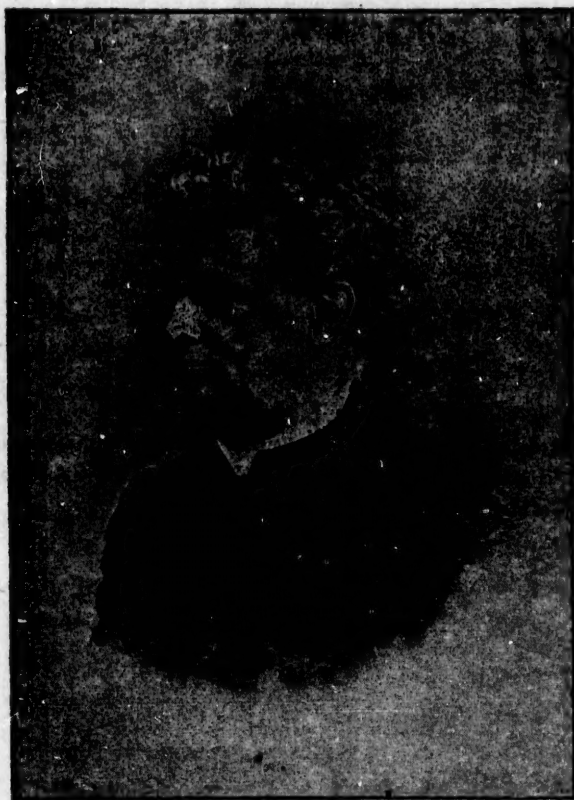
BILL AND POLLY

BILL

MONTREAL

PRICE:—

BILL AND POLLY



By D. V. LUCAS, D.D.,
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R. D. V. LUCAS, D.D.

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BILL AND POLLY.

Quite one-half (perhaps more) of all the liquor drunk in Canada is drunk by men who do not desire it.

It is not so much the love of the liquor as it is love for companionship.

The treating system is one continued assault on the social element in man's nature.

God evidently never intended that man should be a hermit. Indeed, right at the very start He saw that it was not good for man to be alone. I regard solitary confinement as the worst form of human punishment.

The social element is one of the chief ingredients in that mysterious compound—MAN.

Every power man possesses may be perverted. The very tongue wherewith we should bless God is employed to blaspheme His name.

When love of companionship is seized upon and turned into a means whereby its possessor is injured, it is like the over-powering of the gunner by an assailing enemy, reversing it and making it hurl its deadly missiles on its owners.

I have seen, when a boy, a lot of men, at a logging-bee or a corn-husking, chip in their mite, and send off to the low tavern at the "*Four Corners*" for a quart or half gallon of whiskey, and I have seen a man swallow "*a horn*"

of it, making, as the liquid coursed its way down his throat, as horrible a grimace as I ever saw a boy make when his mother, after throwing him on his back, and holding his nose, had choked down his throat a dose of castor-oil.

Why did he make the grimace? Because what he was drinking was nasty. (There is no other proper word.) The taste is unnatural to the human palate.

Then, if it was nasty, why did the fool drink it? Because there was another fool also holding a horn and saying "Well, Joe, old fellow, here's long life to you, may no old house ever fall down on you, or any rattlesnake ever bite you; may you live to see your great-great-grandchildren settled all over the country. Boys, join me in singing,

"For he's a jelly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
For he's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny."

Three cheers and a tiger for Cap'n Joe,—Hip, hip, hurrah! and down she goes," and the grimace, for the stuff cuts its way through the skin of the mouth and throat till the tender nerves cry out—so the grimace.

Nothing could have been done along this line if the social element had not been brought into play. Here has been the starting point towards destruction for untold thousands. It looks very foolish to those of us who are not in it, but to multitudes of young men, and older ones for that matter, especially when they have got well within the whirl of such companionship it looks as if life could not be properly or pleasantly filled up without this kind of hilarity.

A man's companionship constitutes his world ; outside of the social ring which curves around him he sees in the dim distance another, or other worlds, for which he has no strong desires.

The taste of intoxicants for months, ay, sometimes for years, he does not relish, but his companions, his friends, his associates, he loves as he loves his life. They are his social world.

A man in your town waked early one day and said to his wife,

"Polly ! I say, Polly !"

"What, Bill ?"

"I've got to go to *Townton* to-day."

Polly's heart jumped into her throat, Polly's tears came into her eyes. 'That's queer, isn't it ?

Polly soon has the breakfast ready. At the table she started two or three times to speak, but stopped short.

At last she managed to say, "Did you say, you had to go to *Townton* to-day, Bill ?"

"Yeh—yeh—*yass*."

"Well, Bill, what you goin' to *Townton* for ?"

"Why, I want to see a man there on a little business."

Poor Polly hasn't hit it yet. Try again. With a desperate effort she says, "I say, Bill, I want you to make me a promise, will you do it ? there's a good fellow, for I know if you will, you'll keep it."

"Why yes ; what is it, old girl ?"

"Well, I want you to promise me that you won't drink any to-day."

"Drink! Well I never see such a woman as you are. You're everlastingly frettin' your gizzard about somethin' or other. Drink! Whatever put that into your head? Drink! I'm not goin' down there to drink."

"Well, Bill, you needn't get mad about it. You know how it was the last time you were down to Townton."

"Well, I know a feller might take a glass too much with a friend, you know, but I don't care anything about it; I don't want it; I ain't got no hankerin' after it. I'm not goin' down there to drink."

"Well, Bill, I know; I suppose that's all right, but if you only knowed how bad it makes me feel to have you come home that way. Now, Bill, just promise me, and I know you'll do what you promise, for you are a good feller—now, promise me, won't you, Bill?"

"Well, hold on; you needn't bile over quite so much. I believe any woman's got enough tears to run a saw-mill, if you can only git her started. Of course I'll promise you, if that'll do your old heart any good. I'm not goin' down there to drink; I don't care anything about it."

"'Pon your soul, Bill? 'pon your word and honour?"

"'Pon my soul, Polly; 'pon my word and honour. You know, Polly, you can bet on me every time. When I say a thing you know it's all right."

"All right, Bill. I'm so glad; I know you'll keep it. That's all right, Bill. I'll have a splendid supper ready when you get back to-night."

The little girl hears this conversation and, young as she

is, she has come to know what it means. She climbs on his knee and says, "Papa, I'm dist doin' to div you ten tisses, and you know, papa, if you don't drink any nasty whisty to-day I'm doin' to div you to-night more'n a hundred of de sweetest tisses I've dot.

"Papa, do you know what we're doin' to have for supper when you dit home to-night. I heard mamma say dis now out'n de titsun dere, we're doin' to have tustard and pusserves, and nice cake and some of dat new tea what de man bringed here yesterday, and mamma says dat she'll have de supper all ready when de tars tums in, and me and mamma's tummin' down to de bottom of de lane to meet you, too; mamma says so, and I'll jist div you dreat lot my best tisses down at de date, you know, papa, and a dreat lot more when we det done supper. Won't dat be jist jolly, papa?"

Bill loves his wife and his little girl as much as any man ever loved anybody. Bill takes all the kisses he can get from them both.

Bill promises wife and child that he'll drink no whiskey or anything else that will give them any trouble.

Does he mean it? Mean it? No man ever meant it more than he.

Is he honest? There isn't an honest soul in your town. Before he is five miles away he grows an inch or two in his estimation of himself. He's glad the old girl made him promise. He'll let her see that he's a man of his word; that she needn't fret and worry about him. The dear old soul was right about that last time he was at Townton.

He'd been ashamed of it ever since, even if he had not had the courage to own up. But that's all right now. He'll let her see. He'll show her that he's a man of his word; that, so far as whiskey is concerned, he can take it or let it alone, just as he likes.

"Townton's next station, all change. Passengers for the West take the train on the right. For the South, the train on the left, second track." So says the brakeman. The conductor, "TOWNTON. *All change.*"

Bill hadn't got more than five steps on the platform, till he sees Tom, an old friend whom he has not met for ten years.

Tom gave a shout that was heard the whole length of the station, "Hello, Bill, old fellow, how are you? Well, Bill, my word, but it's good for sore eyes to see YOU. Why I thought you were dead. 'Pon my soul, somebody told me so. Bill, why didn't you answer that last letter I sent you, eh? Well, Bill, I declare, I had a thousand questions all cut and dried, to ask you, if I ever did meet you again, and now you've come on me so quick, I declare, I can't think of one of 'em. How are all the folks? Is John Brown and Tom Jones there yet? How are they? Well, Bill, what times we used to have when we were boys!

"Do you ever go fishing now, Bill. Any trout left in the lake?

"I say, Bill, there was not two other fellows in our town could catch so many fish as you and me, eh, Bill? How's Polly?

"Got any kids, Bill? A girl? I'm ahead of you, old boy. I've got three, two girls and a boy.

"I tell you, Bill, the boy's full blood. A regular chip of the old block. It takes the hull of us to hold him.

"I say, Bill, come in and have *somehin'*."

Ah! where are we now? Cross roads. One or the other, quick. Tom's no slow-coach. It won't do for Bill to hang fire. What he does must be done at once.

If Bill had signed a pledge, and got into a new world of teetotalism, and made new companionships, he might have had strength to have said so, but he has not formed new companionships. He has not reached that new social world. He has not signed any pledge. If Polly and the little child were now at his side to remind him of his promise and tell Tom what he had promised, it might be very different.

If he should hesitate even for a few seconds Tom's quick eye would see it and he would say, "Bill, what's the matter with you? I hope the W.C.T.U. hasn't got hold of you, eh? Ha, ha, ha! Where's your blue ribbon?" Poor Bill has no power to stand any such banter as that. He now hates the grog as never before. He wishes the whole of it was in the depths of the sea. He wishes Tom hadn't asked him. He loves Tom. Always did. Has drunk with him many a time. He would not offend him for the world. What he does now he must do very quickly.

He would not like his old friend to think he has changed toward him in the least degree. It is so with all of us. There is nothing pleases us more than to hear an old friend

say in the most familiar tones, "Well, John, you're the same old John you always was, I don't see that you've changed a single bit."

Bill thinks, "I'll just take one glass; she won't know anything about it."

That's Tom's treat. When Bill has that glass to his face it occurs to his mind that if he don't offer to treat in his turn, Tom will be sure to think that he is not what he used to be. Now perhaps Tom might not think it at all, but so it appears to Bill. How do you account for it? The fact is, there never was a glass of intoxicating beverage yet turned to a man's mouth, without a devil was in it.

I cannot flatter myself that such an idea is original, it occurred to the shrewd mind of England's greatest poet hundreds of years ago. The devil in the glass told Bill that if he didn't treat too, Tom would be sure to think that he is not as generous and as large-hearted a friend as he used to be, and Bill could not bear to have Tom think that. So it is Bill's treat.

Bill is just in that stage (a sort of transition condition) as a drinker, that while not tempted he cares very little for it, but is so affected by it physically, that if you can get the alcohol of two glasses into him, he is ready to forget all promises to his wife and child, to tread all good resolutions, all self-esteem, under foot, and the man who came from home intending to return at night a sober husband and a loving and proud father, returns a week hence with a heart full of remorse and hate, readier far to kick his child than to receive her kisses.

The supper prepared was not eaten, for even the poor wife could not partake of it, and the dear little one went to bed sobbing because papa had not returned.

Here is a home made more wretched than anything else can make it by the drinking of a man who is not so much a slave to a vitiated appetite, as he is a slave to bad companionship.

The social element in his nature is perverted. The gun has been taken by the enemy and made to fire on its owner.

One of the warmest friends I have in Quebec is an Irish Catholic priest. He said "Do you know, Mr. Lucas, why I work so hard to carry the Scott Act in this county? I will tell you. There is my brother Frank, one of the kindest and largest-hearted men that ever lived. He had become tied up with drinking companions to such an extent that he could not keep from drinking, although he cared but little for the taste of it. He lost his place, he was not earning anything for his family, till at last he made up his mind to leave his family under my care and go down into a Vermont town where no licenses were granted for the sale of liquor. He got a good situation, was well clad, regained his self-respect, and sent home regularly a part of his earnings for the support of his family. At Christmas time he got off for a week to come home to spend the Christmas holidays with his wife and children. He had purchased a lot of candies, toys and picture books for presents for his little ones. In changing cars at Lennoxville he met with several of his old cronies, who made as much fuss over him

as I have represented Tom to have made over Bill. The curtain falls; when it rises some days after Christmas, Frank is sitting in the midst of his family with his elbows on his knees, and his head between his hands, and he is crying like a whipped child, saying, "I am ashamed to look at you, I came to Canada to spend a merry Christmas with you. I brought a lot of presents for the children, but I don't know where they are. I suppose they are somewhere about the tavern in Lennoxville. When I am in Vermont at my work I never think about the drink, nobody ever says, 'Frank will you come and take something.' I do not care for it, and I never see it for sale anywhere; but when I get back here among these old cronies, and they say 'Frank come and have a drink,' it seems as if some demon gets a hold of me; I do not understand it."

Ah! poor Frank, some of us understand it for you. How often have you heard it said of some one, "Do you know, he is just one of the best fellows that ever lived, if it wasn't for that one thing?"

Certainly—a large social element in his make-up. Very fond of friends; would die to save a friend. A big heart; would put himself a long way out to do you a kindness; would far rather suffer anything than hurt the feelings of a companion.

By easy steps, without foreseeing the harm, he has got into a wrong social world. The biggest gun in his fort has been seized by the drink traffic and the drink habit, and made to do damage to its owner.

Well, my poor Bill, by-and-bye, lost his place. Could get nothing to do. Polly and the little girl wouldn't eat when they could, because they felt so badly. They could do nothing but cry. Now, they could not eat if they would, for a good part of the time there is nothing in the house. They don't cry much now; they have become somewhat hardened to it. There are a good many others like them. Their mill has ceased to grind for them any comforts and only a very little of the actual necessities of life. The devil's mills still go round, grinding up as so much useless ore husbands and sons, and swallowing up in their bottomless hoppers whatever little gold may be found in the pockets of their victims.

It is proposed to stop, by a vote of the people, this iniquitous and disgraceful traffic in the bodies and souls of men. Some one says, nay, many say, "If you do, you will ruin business in your town." Who says it? Not the sober, industrious teetotaler. I never knew such a one to cry out "You will ruin business if you close the grog shops." Even if he should think that such might be the case, he would much more likely say, "If something must be ruined, let us the rather ruin business than the bodies and souls of our neighbors."

Let us see how far such predictions have any foundation in sober thought and intelligent reasoning.

The story is told of a witty temperance advocate delivering a stirring address on the question which lay so near his heart, when there was thrown, by a loyal representative

of the whiskey business, an egg, which, as it was said, must have been laid by a very sick hen. The missile struck the worthy orator fair in the face. What do you think he did? Why, he took out his handkerchief and wiped away the *foul* thing, and said: "I have always maintained that the arguments of our opponents were exceedingly rotten." Well, I fancy that the more you consider the foundation upon which the whole whiskey fabric rests, the more you will be convinced of the truth of the orator's remark.

From the centre to the circumference, from the top to the bottom, you will find the arguments of the friends of whiskey as rotten as the materials from which very much of their goods is made.

Let us look for a little at this one: "You will ruin business if you stop the sale of liquor."

Do you see, standing on either side of me, two men? Shut your eyes if you can't see them without. The one on my right is well dressed. He has a suit of the best of tweed, a silk hat and umbrella, and a gold watch. He is a traveller for the firm of Brown & Tomkins, at \$1,500 a year. The man on my left has a pair of old thrown-away shoes, out of which his toes are sticking. He has no socks, a pair of pants which for patches are a regular crazy quilt, a shirt with no front and no collar. He is minus a vest, with a coat to match the rest of his garments, and a hat he picked up in a back yard. It is my friend Bill; come down this by regular process. A graduate with dishonors from the school of Bung. I see at the other end

of the room, all on one seat, the bootmaker, the butcher, the merchant tailor, the hatter, the draper and the photographer. To this group of men, representing the useful and honorable trades in our town, I say: "Gentlemen, you see these two men standing by me? To which of them do you extend an invitation to visit your places of business?"

"To which? Why, to the one on your right, of course."

To the one on my right you say; and why, gentlemen, to him?

"Because he looks as if he might sometimes want a pair of boots, or a roast of meat, or a suit of clothes and a new watch, and he looks as if he has the money to pay for them."

And, pray, gentlemen, what will you do with the one on my left?

"Do with him? Well, if we must do anything with him, we will send him and his family to the poorhouse, and pay for their keep there rather than have the likes of him around our places of business."

Will you allow me, gentlemen, to suggest something which I think is a good deal better than that? I have known these two men from their childhood, and I can assure you that this man on my left has naturally fifty per cent. more brain than the other. He has more native wit; he has a larger heart; he is in every sense naturally a good fellow. You know as well as I do what has brought him to his present condition.

A vote is to be taken next week to abolish in this com-

munity the liquor traffic, which has not only made this man, but scores and hundreds of others, useless, and more than useless, members of society, besides entailing on their innocent wives and helpless children want and squalor and wretchedness indescribable.

I am sent by a committee to ask you to join your votes with ours in stopping that which you know has made this man what he is.

Do you hesitate? You remember the story of the very rich man, who thought he was dying, and sent for his minister and asked him: "Do you think, dear sir, that if I should give ten thousand dollars to remove the debt on the church it would secure for me an entrance into heaven?"

The good orthodox minister replied: "Well, brother, I am afraid to preach that kind of doctrine, but it strikes me that there would be no great harm in trying the thing."

You have for a long time sanctioned that which has made this unfortunate man what you now see him, of no service to you, a curse to himself, his family and the community generally; and what makes it so serious a matter is that there are a great many more just like him, made so by your liquor traffic. Now, we propose to put a stop to this business. Surely there can be no great harm in trying the thing.

I assume that these tradesmen hearken to my appeal, and join with us in refusing to grant any more licenses for the sale of intoxicants.

A few weeks later Tolmie, the manager of the big iron

works, meets my friend Bill in the street, and says: "Good morning, Bill; they tell me you're not drinking any now?"

"No, Mr. Tolmie; no, sir. I can't get it anyway, I am glad to say."

"Well, Bill, you know I often told you that you were one of my best men. You know that I did everything to encourage you if you would only stay away from those old chums of yours, and let the drink alone. I had to discharge you because you wasted your time and weakened your body by drink. I have often thought of you and your family. You have a good wife and a nice little girl if they had decent clothes and enough to eat."

"Yes, I know, Mr. Tolmie. It is all my fault. I am ashamed of it. I've a good wife, and I love my little girl, but it's awful hard work now to get anything to do. People don't seem to want me; I suppose they think I'm no use now. I can't blame them, Mr. Tolmie. I'd be glad if I was dead if it wasn't for Polly and our little Lily."

"Well, Bill, I guess I'll take you back. Do you think you would like to try again? I can't set you, for the present, at your old job, for I don't think your hand would be steady enough for that, and so I cannot give you as much pay as I used to, but perhaps you can get back into it by-and-bye. Come Monday morning."

Poor Bill! he doesn't amount to much now. Weakened by the use of alcohol, and weakened by the want of food, almost a total wreck. He can only do odd jobs, but he is

in the hands of a kind master, who will in every possible way encourage him.

At the end of the week Tolmie puts into Bill's hand eight dollars. Poor Bill runs all the way home, and calls out as he enters the door, "Polly! Polly! ho, Polly! where are you? Do you know, Polly, that Mr. Tolmie has given me eight dollars for my week's work. I don't believe I earned the half of it, but here she is."

"We haven't had so much money as this in the house for this two years, have we, Polly?"

Poor Polly's eyes fill with tears; tears of joy, and she says, "God bless the good men who have taken the temptation away from my poor husband."

"Well, Polly, what shall we do with it?"

Polly, the good soul, replies: "Well, Bill, you know I've been washing and scrubbing around for some of the women along this street, and I saved a quarter out of it and bought a little yarn and just knit you a new pair of socks. Now, Bill, you must have a new pair of boots. Go down right away to Ford's and get yourself a new pair of boots."

Poor Polly! Poor women by the thousand! In many lands I have seen them, for this vile grog business produces the same effect everywhere. Poor women, more thoughtful of their husbands than of themselves. How good they'd be if they had half a chance. Held down by the iron grasp of this hellish monster, what can they do? Weep, as I have known them do when they have come to

me for advice and encouragement—weep till their fountain of tears is dried up—then settle down into a condition of despair to suffer to life's end what they have made up their minds cannot be cured.

Oh where is the chivalric spirit of the knights-errant of old? Will no one arise to redress the wrongs of the women and innocent children who are being crushed under the heel of this pitiless foe of our race?

Poor Polly has no boots of her own; her feet are protected by a pair of old slippers which a lady, at whose house she was washing and scrubbing, had given her rather than put them into the stove. Polly thinks, first of all, of her poor husband, who must have a new pair of boots to match his new socks her hands have just knit for him. So Bill takes half the money and away he goes to help "to ruin business" now that there are no more grog shops.

"Mr. Ford, have you any boots that'll fit me?"

"No, Bill; we haven't any boots that'll fit you. I told you once before that you needn't come here for boots. I don't want your custom."

"I've got the money to pay for them, Mr. Ford; see, here she is, brand new, right out the bank?"

"Oh well, Bill, I don't know, perhaps we have some of your size, when I come to think. What size do you take, Bill?"

He gets the boots, just the fit, pays his money, and starts for home.

Now, can you persuade Ford that that kind of trade is

going to ruin him? He hasn't had a dollar for years out of Bill or any of his kind, and there are a good many of them.

Bill gets on his new socks and his new boots. Dear little Lily! If you could only have seen her you would have felt that you had had big pay for your prohibition vote. Though she was in rags, poor child, yet she danced around her father. She clapped her hands, she kissed her poor ragged father, because he had new boots. She could not remember ever to have seen her father before with a new pair of boots.

It does seem cruel, doesn't it, to see these children so happy over the "*ruination*" of business?

"Polly, what shall we do with the rest of the money?"

"Well, Bill, you know it's a good while now since we had any meat in the house, except that piece of liver the lady gave me when I was doing her washing. She said there was more than they wanted, and she would as leave give it to me as throw it to the dog. You take a dollar and go up to Brown's, the butcher's, and get a nice roast, and Lily and I will go out on the common and gather some wood, and we'll have a nice roast for to-morrow. You can buy two loaves of new bread at Burk's, the baker's, as you come along. It will be so nice to have one good big feast to-morrow, for it has been a long while now since we had a real good dinner."

Now, my dear sir, will you kindly step into Brown's and Burk's and ask them if their business is being ruined by the closing of the grog shops?

As Bill gets farther and farther away from the drink he becomes stronger, more like himself. He gets back to his old place. His wages are doubled. You have not only, by the removal of evil temptation from him, put him in the way of using for better purposes what little money he might now and then acquire, but you have increased his power to earn.

You have turned the "useless creature" into a useful citizen. He once more joins hands with you in wealth producing; not only ministering to the happiness and respectability of his own household, but helping you to make your country rich and prosperous.

The boot-maker, the butcher and the baker have had a first instalment, to be followed every week, from a house which for years gave them no orders. The dry-goods merchant gets a share, for Polly and Lily now have several new dresses. The merchant tailor and the watchmaker find that Bill is now worth a pressing invitation to pay them an occasional visit. "Ruin business!" Ah, me!

A grog-seller's wife (or rather an ex-grog-seller, for his license had not been renewed, the local option law having been adopted) was denouncing the law with might and main; telling as fast as her tongue could clatter how business had been ruined in the town since the law came into force. She was going ahead at such a speed that she couldn't quite "haul over the reverse lever" and stop in the right place. An undertaker happened to pass just as she was a-going at full speed, and she said: "There, that

man's business has been ruined, too." Ah! that may be. There are exceptions, I admit. The undertaker may not have quite so much to do, and the doctor may find that his business is a little less. I have known, however, both undertakers and doctors among our most zealous advocates for closing the grog shops.

There are men who love their race who do not always stop to ask whether or not business will suffer if the salvation of men and the restoration of happiness to ruined homes are under consideration. When, however, our opponents tell us that the closing of grog shops will ruin business, we tell them a story of the Lancashire boy who was slightly defective, both mentally and physically. When he, with some others, were stoning the windows of an empty house the policeman came on them suddenly. The rest scampered away, leaving the semi-simpleton to his fate. The "cop" grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and raised his baton as if to strike, when the boy said: "Nay, nay, thoo maunt lick mea, for oi'm not all theer." "Well," said the "cop," "I'll lick what is theer." See? We fear these whiskey people are not quite all "*theer*" when they resort to such tactics, but we'll lick what is "*theer*," and so, with God's help, rescue our Christianity, our civilization and our land from this long-standing disgrace—the liquor traffic.

D. V. LUCAS.

GRIMSBY, ONT., *August, 1893.*

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